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## Sick Ash May Be Anthracnose, Not Emerald Ash Borer

**Kyoko Scanlon / DNR**

Many central and southern Wisconsin residents are noticing that their ash trees' leaves appear thin and sparse, or dropped off shortly after the trees leafed out.

The cause of the problem is anthracnose, a fungal leaf disease that infects ash and other deciduous shade trees. It is not as serious as you might think.



Photo by Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service

"Ash leaf drop was noticed in many areas of Wisconsin following Memorial Day," according to Kyoko Scanlon, a forest pathologist with the Wisconsin DNR. "Due to loss of leaves, affected trees have a thinner crown, as if the ash trees never quite leafed out."

Anthracnose is the name for several common fungal diseases that affect the foliage of ash and other woody ornamentals. Symptoms can vary by host, but in general the condition is marked by tan or brown, irregular spots and dead areas in leaves, often following a leaf's vein. Fallen leaves may have black blotches or appear curled or distorted.

Spring 2008 weather was conducive to the development of anthracnose, but this is not the first

year the disease has affected the state's ash trees. Linda Williams, a DNR forest health specialist, said the fungal disease was widespread in 2004.

"Some ash trees were almost completely leafless in early June of that year, and many homeowners were concerned their trees would die," Williams said. "But those trees started to produce additional leaves, and eventually looked much better and did not sustain any long-term ill effects."

Some consider anthracnose a cosmetic disease. While it initially makes an ash look ragged, anthracnose does not kill. When leaves mature, temperatures warm up, and the wetness of spring decreases, the problem usually subsides.



Photo by Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service

To deal with the effects of anthracnose, as for all trees, keep them healthy. Also, discard fallen and infected leaves to reduce the number of spores that cause anthracnose infections. A UW-Extension bulletin on anthracnose can be found at <http://wihort.uwex.edu/gardenfacts/XHT1001b.pdf>.

**Sign up for the WI EAB Program Newsletter**

**Send an E-mail to [eab@datcp.state.wi.us](mailto:eab@datcp.state.wi.us)**

## EAB Statewide Survey Update

**Mick Skwarok / DATCP**

With summer drawing to a close, the search for EAB using purple traps and visual surveys is winding down, and crews with DATCP and DNR are poised to start planning another round of fall and winter survey work using girdled ash trees.

Despite record summer storms and a variety of other problems, DATCP crews managed to establish approximately 3,500 purple traps across the state. Collecting suspicious-looking beetles from those traps is underway, as is the careful inspection of thousands of insect samples.



**Nate Hoftiezer reviews insect samples in Madison**

Surveyors working for DNR visually inspected nearly 700 ash trees in 80 private campgrounds in 12 Wisconsin counties. Additionally, contractors with DNR during the last three summers have finished preparing some 300 ash trees for fall cutting and peeling.

At the time this newsletter was written, EAB had not been discovered in Wisconsin.

## Revised EAB Response Plan

DNR Secretary Matt Frank and DATCP Secretary Rod Nilsestuen have given approval to an updated Wisconsin Emerald Ash Borer Response Plan. In addition to DNR and DATCP, USDA-Forest Service, USDA-APHIS and the University of Wisconsin lent a hand in drafting the plan.

The plan incorporates the latest scientific and practical knowledge gained from scientists and states where

EAB already exists, and lays out a framework for responding to the discovery of EAB in Wisconsin.

This plan is a dynamic document. Progress in other states' management programs, research findings, and changes in the recommendations from the National EAB Science Panel and the National EAB Management Team will likely impact the Wisconsin Emerald Ash Borer Response Plan in the future.

The plan describes a range of possible management steps and recommends balancing any particular treatment with environmental impacts, land ownership, cost, sociological impacts, size of the infestation and traditional ecological knowledge. When an infestation is discovered, a management recommendation based on the options detailed in the updated plan will only be offered by the state agencies and other partners once they have had the opportunity to thoroughly investigate the infestation and consult with local officials and residents.

An electronic version of the plan can be found at: <http://www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov/pdf/2008WIEABResponsePlan.pdf>.

## Community EAB Resources

**Laura Wyatt / DNR**

The impact of EAB on Wisconsin communities is likely to be significant with ash species often comprising 20 percent or more of a community's street tree population. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has several tools available to assist communities as they prepare for the anticipated arrival of EAB. The *Emerald Ash Borer Toolkit for Wisconsin Communities* can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/uf/eab/> and contains an assortment of resources designed to help urban forest managers plan for and manage EAB and educate elected officials and residents of the impact.

Designed for communities of all sizes, the toolkit guides communities through the process of creating a readiness plan and provides guidelines on tree assessment, EAB detection, wood utilization, media outreach, and more. Revised in June, 2008, the toolkit also contains an extensive journal of DNR staff field notes from a fact-finding trip to Michigan and Ohio.

Each year, WDNR offers financial assistance for urban forestry projects that improve a community's

capacity to manage its trees. Grant funds are available to support a variety of projects and for 2009 the emphasis will be on EAB preparedness.

Eligible applicants may be a city, village, town, county, tribal government or 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Wisconsin's Urban Forestry Grant program is a 50-50 cost-share program with grant awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000. Previous projects have supported successful partnerships as well as countless hours from volunteers, consultants and dedicated urban forestry professionals.

New for 2009 is a simplified grant application for communities that want to start a program or restart a program they once had. The startup grant application is targeted for small projects that encourage initial tree management, with a maximum award of \$5,000.00. This is in addition to the regular urban forestry grant.

To learn more about the grant program visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/UF/grants/> or contact Candice Sovinski at [candice.sovinski@wisconsin.gov](mailto:candice.sovinski@wisconsin.gov) or at (608) 267-3775.

## Woodlot Owners: Don't Jump the Gun (or chainsaw) on EAB

### Brian Schwingle / DNR Forester

As EAB looms on the horizon, should we be harvesting our ash before EAB gets here? Rest assured, until EAB is found in your local area, continue with your regularly scheduled harvests.

Preparing our forests for the arrival of EAB does *not* mean removing all ash trees from your stand or not planting some on appropriate sites. Removing ash trees before your regularly scheduled harvest is not recommended for several reasons; we cannot predict when EAB will arrive in a given stand, and biological control agents for EAB are being introduced, and these may help control EAB populations when they arrive.

In forests with a high ash component scheduled thinning or harvesting of ash, without eliminating it, can reduce the impacts of EAB on the stand when the insect arrives. When selecting ash trees to thin, mark those that have low vigor and quality, maintain dominant and co-dominant ash trees with good form, and follow the stocking guidelines for your forest

type. Remember, forest management is an investment, and like investing in stocks, the lowest risk forest is a diverse forest.

To learn more on preparing Wisconsin forests for EAB, visit:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/fh/PDF/EABWIManagementGuidelines.pdf>.

## Don't be Fooled by these WI Beetles

There are plenty of shiny, green beetles in Wisconsin. Some are very similar to emerald ash borer. Here are few that the Program Hotline staff often hear about.

Tiger Beetle



Japanese Beetle



Bronze Birch Borer



Click Beetle



### Wisconsin Emerald Ash Borer Program

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin Madison & Extension, US Forest Service, USDA-APHIS

[www.EmeraldAshBorer.wi.gov](http://www.EmeraldAshBorer.wi.gov)

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